

Filing a Claim of Discrimination with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights

1. Contact us

You can call, email, fax, check outgo to our website, or drop by to meet with us in person

2. Tell us what happened

We'll schedule an intake meeting where you'll tell us about your situation.

3. File a complaint

If the facts call for an investigation, we will type a complaint for you to sign. The final decision to file is up to you.

4. We investigate the case

You sign the complain → SOCR contacts the Respondent (the business you believe is discriminating against you). → An investigator meets with you to go over the case in detail. → The investigator conducts interviews and gathers evidence.

Depending on your case, this process can take several months or more

5. Possible case outcomes

Reasonable Cause

We find that the evidence supports a finding of illegal discrimination.

Administrative closure

We close the case if the investigation cannot be completed, or if you choose to file your case in court.

Settlement

You and the Respondent come to voluntary agreement.

Withdrawal

You withdraw your complaint.

No Reasonable Cause

We find that the evidence does not support a finding of illegal discrimination.

Referral: If your situation does not qualify for investigation, SOCR makes a referral to another agency whenever possible.

Reaching an agreement: At any time in the investigation, we can help you and the Respondent settle the case instead of doing a full investigation.

Remedies: If SOCR finds Reasonable Cause, we will determine the remedies. Examples of remedies are payment of back rent or mandatory training for management and workers.

Appeal: If we find No Reasonable Cause, you have the right to appeal the decision within 30 days to the Seattle Human Rights Commission.



Seattle
Office for Civil Rights

810 Third Avenue, Suite 750, Seattle, WA 98104-1627
Tel: (206) 684-4500, Fax: (206) 684-0332, TTY: (206) 684-4503
www.seattle.gov/civilrights

Accommodations for people with disabilities and language interpretation provided upon request.

How can I prepare for my meeting?

- Be ready to talk about your situation. You can also write it down in advance ahead of time if you think it will be helpful.
- Bring a list of witnesses with names and phone numbers.
- Gather documents you think will help.
- You can bring someone with you to your intake meeting if you would like support.

When should I file a complaint?

As soon as possible. We cannot accept employment, public accommodations, or contracting cases that are more than 1.5 years old. We also cannot accept housing or public accommodations cases that are more than 1 year old.

Will the details of my complaint be made public?

Possibly. Under Washington state law, government agencies must disclose documents if someone requests them in most situations. For more information on public disclosure, call 206-684-4500 to speak with the Public Disclosure Officer.

What if I experience retaliation after I file a complaint?

Retaliation for filing a complaint, or otherwise exercising your right to be free from discrimination, is illegal. If it happens, contact us right away.

SOCR investigates discrimination in:

- Employment
- Public Accommodations
- Housing
- Contracting

Illegal discrimination may occur if you are treated differently from others because of your:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Race | • Marital status |
| • National origin | • Use of a Section 8 certificate |
| • Disability | • Alternative source of income |
| • Use of a service animal | • Ancestry |
| • Sex | • Color |
| • Sexual orientation | • Creed |
| • Gender identity | • Political ideology |
| • Parental status | • Military status or veteran |
| • Retaliation | • Criminal history |
| • Age | |
| • Religion | |

If your employment, public accommodations, or contracting experience happened within the last year and a half or in housing within the last year, contact us to talk about your situation.

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Aug. 2020

Experienced Discrimination?

**A step by step guide
to filing a complaint**



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